

U.S. Patent Appln. No. 10/038,719
Amendment Dated July 26, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 26, 2005
Docket No. BOC9-2001-0025 (271)

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are submitted responsive to the office action dated April 26, 2005 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed, no fee is believed due.

In paragraphs 2-3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,470,338 to Rizzo, *et al.* (Rizzo).

I. Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, and 27 have been amended to emphasize and clarify various disclosed aspects of the present invention. Specifically, claims 1, 7, 15, 16, and 22 have been amended to clarify that the method facilitates business relationships among businesses, as supported by page 5, lines 3-4. Claims 1, 7, 15, 16, and 22 have also been amended to clarify that the business profiles are associated with one of the businesses participating in the online business registry, as supported by page 5, lines 5-6.

Claims 2, 12, 17, and 27 have been amended to clarify that the online business registry conforms to a UDDI specification, as supported by page 5, lines 28-29. Claims 4 and 19 have been amended to clarify that security features can restrict profile access based upon a categorization of business profiles, as supported by page 6, lines 16-23. Claims 6 and 21 have been amended to clarify that selected ones of the business attributes are exposed only to inquiring businesses having corresponding business attributes, as supported by page 7, line 1. Claims 8 and 23 have been clarified to emphasize that the communication link is established according to business attributes of the located businesses, as supported by page 10, lines 7-10.

No new matter has been added.

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II. Applicants Invention as Claimed

Prior to addressing the rejections on the art, a brief review of the Applicants' invention is in order. Applicants' invention provides a method and system for linking businesses through common interests. That is, businesses sharing a common interest can share business information with one another in a searchable fashion. One aspect of the present invention can facilitate business relationships by storing business profiles of various participating businesses within a business registry, which can include a UDDI registry.

Participating businesses can query the business registry for other businesses whose business profiles include particular, desirable business attributes. For example, a business can query the business registry to find out about suppliers that are used by similar businesses. The business profiles can include a variety of business attributes detailing information about the participating businesses. Moreover, the business attributes can include information which can be used to establish a communications link between inquiring businesses and businesses located by a search of the business registry, which can be referred to as "found" or "located" businesses. For example, a communications link specified by a business can permit other businesses to make contact via e-mail, where a different business can permit and/or prefer contact be established via a Web site, a telephone network, postal mail, and the like.

III. Rizzo fails to explicitly or inherently teach each claimed limitation

Claims 1-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,470,338 to Rizzo.

Rizzo teaches a computerized method for matching clients with legal service providers. A potential client can enter information case specific information via a Web

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site. This case information is compared against a database of legal service providers. Matching providers can be sent an email message concerning the match. From this email message, client specific information can be obtained along with contact information for establishing a communication with the client.

Applicants note that the concept of a business contact management registry for businesses, containing the business information, queryable by other ones of the registry participants is believed to be novel, useful, and nonobvious over known art that existed at the time of the present invention.

Referring to independent claims 1, 15, and 16, Applicants claim that:

(1) a plurality of businesses participate within an online business registry, which contains a profile for each of the businesses

(2) participating businesses (an inquiring business) are able to query the online business registry based upon business attributes contained in the business profiles

(3) based upon the query, a communication link between two participating businesses (an inquiring business and a located business) is established

Consequently, Applicants claim a "closed system" that is used by business professionals (inquiring business) to share business information contained in the online business registry. Part of the sharing of business information can include a communication mechanism for establishing contact among the businesses participating in the registry based upon query results.

Rizzo provides a customer matching service, which is an "open system" that matches potential clients with professionals based upon case-specific information. That is, Rizzo provides a means for customers and professionals to establish relationships with each other. Rizzo fails to teach that an entity that is querying an online business registry is also a participant of the online business registry. That is, the users of the business registry are all businesses that query the registry for information supplied by other ones

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of the users. Hence, Rizzo fails to explicitly or inherently teach that an inquiring business and a located business are both participants of an online registry, which stores profiles associated with each of the participating businesses. Because each claimed limitation must be explicitly or inherently taught by a cited reference, the § 102(e) rejections to claims 1, 7, 15, 16, and 22 based on Rizzo should be withdrawn, which action is respectfully requested.

Even though claims dependent upon claims 1, 7, 15, 16, and 22 should now be in an allowable state, Applicants shall briefly provide additional distinguishing comments regarding dependent claims.

Referring to claims 2, 12, 17, and 27, Applicants claim that the online business registry conforms to a UDDI specification, which is not taught by Rizzo. The "registry" of Rizzo appears to be a generic Internet accessible data store. This difference is significant as a UDDI system does not conventionally allow businesses to share business information with one another (in the manner claimed). Using a UDDI registry in conjunction with the claimed invention is particularly beneficial as UDDI registries store the type of information which is needed for the Applicants' claimed invention to be implemented, yet fail to use the information for the claimed purposes. Hence, claims 2, 12, 17, and 27 are directed towards an enhancement to existing UDDI registries in a novel, useful, and non-obvious fashion.

Referring to claims 4 and 19, Applicants claim that the online business registries categorize business profiles according to business functions and/or market segments and that security is provided based upon these categories. Rizzo provides no similar teachings.

Referring to claims 6 and 21, Applicants claim that business attributes are exposed only to inquiring businesses having corresponding business attributes (to those being queried). Rizzo provides no similar teachings, and instead provides conflicting teachings

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in that the querying entities (clients) are entities outside the set of entities that have business profiles (lawyers or other professionals).

Referring to claims 7 and 22, Applicants claim that an inquiring business first locates a set of profiles for one or more located businesses. Then, references to other businesses are identified within the profiles of the located businesses. The profiles associated with the other businesses are then queried to determine businesses attributes specified by the inquiring business. No similar teachings are provided by Rizzo.

Referring to claims 8 and 23, Applicants claim that a communication link can be established according to business attributes of the other business. No corresponding attributes for establishing a communication link (contained within queryable business attributes) are taught by Rizzo.

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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